Killer Cabot flees from the Hangman's noose—only to run into something more terrible deep in the malignant swamp!
Having adapted previous works of the seminal fantasist H.P. Lovecraft, Gou Tanabe turns to the Providence prophet's short novel At the Mountains of Madness. Tanabe's richly detailed drawings bring to chily life the vast Antarctic expanse and weird subterranean spaces through which an intrepid crew from Miskatonic University pursues an increasingly unearthly mystery. The solemn pacing recreates Lovecraft's mode of horror, based more on dread than shock. Even after Warren's attempt to copyability, Hefner was the inspiration for many a would-be creator such as Frank Munsey, creator of the pulp magazine Famous Monsters of Filmland, owned by primordial fanboy Forrest J. Ackerman. Slapped together from material that failure to experience and moved on to his business (see Bill Schelly's biography, Empire of Monsters and More, Media to the Squadron of Flyboys and Swamp Thing), Warren Publications provided due exposure to the many publishers whose output had been overlooked, then and now, by the EC, Atlas, Marvel and DC. Some stories follow the EC formula of whole sale and disgruntled contributors, not to mention competitors ranging from "shoddy dupli- cates" like Famous Monsters of Filmland, to serious imitations. Distributions, reactionaries, wholesalers and disgruntled contributors, not to mention the small number of would-be duplicat- es like Weird and Psychotic to Mighty Marvel and DC. All while swimming through the mire. Like the young and sassy Andru & Esposito, Bob Powell's hairucinogenic layouts. Some looks like it was drawn with a tongue depressor. Things like the crap is often creepier than the cream. Hey, that's cont- ent. Reserve the terrific tomes above at lexpublib.org! Now Fantagraphics has re- leased an Oversize collection of that work. Full-page watercolors, spot illustrations and art for the sake of art quite separate from the more suave and vivid pin- ups of today.

Imagine if Dario Argento directed an anime version of Sheridan Le Fanu's sapp- hobic vampire classic Carmilla in which the heroine is a furry and you've got the broad strokes of When I Arrived at the Castle by Canadian cartoonist Emily Carroll. Car- roll's gift for the uncanny was showcased in her popular collection of weird tales Through the Woods (still available via LPL TEEN). In Castle, Carroll crank ups the body horror and emotional terror. Her style is a blend of comics, manga, story- books and novels, often using full-page im- ages (below) for both scares and symbol- ism. It’s haunting, and gruesome, so reader beware. Get it at Central and Tates Creek.

An inveterate sketcher, Sala has stacks of art for the sake of art quite separate from graphic novels like The Chucking Whosit and The Bloody Cardinal (still available via lexpublib.org.) Now Fantagraphics has re- leased an Oversize collection of that work. Full-page watercolors, spot illustrations and short comics hand-picked by Sala cover his now decades-long career, from the inky Grotesque Tableau of his new wave youth to the more suave and vivid pin-ups of today. You’ll find Phantoms in the Attic at Central!
Like Richard Sala, fellow creepster cartoonist Charles Burns got his start in the alternative comics scene of the 1990s. But unlike Sala, Burns has returned to his punk rock roots time and again. The most recent example is the Fantagraphics collection of Burn’s DIY mag Free Sh*t. A giveaway originally published in the basic 8-page black & white mini-comics format, FS was made up of sketches both rough and finished, character designs, art exercises—such as tracings from old romance comics—and other ephemera. It’s a glimpse of the rough heart beating beneath the cool exterior of Burn’s famously sleek, slick art. Get FS from Central and Northside. Meanwhile, one of Burn’s influences, Johnny Craig, is the subject of the latest volume from the EC Artists Library. Just as Doctor of Horror by Graham Ingels (still available at lexpublib.org) reprinted work from the pre-“New Trend” titles, so does The Woman Who Loved Life (Fantagraphics). Craig was one of the first regular contributors to what was then a struggling undercard outfit, writing and drawing for titles like Saddle Justice and War Against Crime. Even amid such generic postwar fare, Craig had star power. Crime fiction of the hard-boiled school. Collins wanted to be Mickey Spillane, not Stan Lee. Likewise, Beatty’s low-key, basic style was a stark contrast to the flash and filigree of Chaykin, Truman and other stars of the direct sales market. Never a natural cartoonist, his stiff figures, stagy backgrounds and rudimentary layouts owed more to the cramped aesthetic of modern newspaper strips than the page-filling panache of contemporary comic books. Hardly more than cutt figures in the comics scene, the duo has been far more successful in the world of daily syndication. Beatty went on to draw the classic adventure strip The Phantom before taking over Rex Morgan M.D. Collins became one of the maven’s of mystery fiction based on his own work and his inheritance of both the Spillane estate and the writing chores on Dick Tracy. Tracy’s influence on comic books goes back to the beginnings of the industry—the first issue (of 1356) of Dell’s flagship Four Color Comics featured Chester Gould’s square-jawed crime buster—and publishers continue to pro-

MEANWHILE

His inventive layouts, well-placed blacks and use of wordless panels brought a modern flair to the timeworn plots of “Madman,” “Zombiel!” and “Portfolio in Death.” And despite his own belief that he was bad at drawing the ladies, Craig’s stories often focused on the plight of women in a man’s world, from the title story to such harrowing tales as “Mute Witness to Murder” and “Edna Sunday”. Fans of classic comics and crime fiction should nab The Woman Who Loved Live from Central. That’s also the home of the latest Hard Case Crime graphic novel. But whereas the other HCC books were originals, Ms. Tree: One Mean Mother reprints earlier work— not the stories that introduced the distaff dick back in 1983, but those done for DC’s Ms. Tree Quarterly in the early 1990s. Both writer Max Allan Collins and artist Terry Beatty stood out from the madding crowd of the early 80s indie comics boom. Like many of his peers, Collins was a fanboy. But his obsession was mote the trench-coated terror of the underworld. The latest examples are the upcoming Dick Tracy Forever and the current Dead or Alive by Richie (Spy Seal) Tommaso and the Michael Allred family. Featuring many classic Tracy villains— Big Boy, the Mole, Flat-top, BB Eyes—this IDW update stays true to the character while opening up his saga to 21st Century influences. Meanwhile, an artist who could have been a major influence on the 20th Century never got his chance due to WWII and his own demented ideas. Polish artist Stanislaw Szukalski had a sweet deal going in his homeland until the Nazis invaded. Szukalski escaped to California, home of mad geniuses. Impressive in itself, Szukalski’s work is given some four-color flair by its subject: his pseudo-scientific philosophy of Zermatism, which argues that the ever-present threat to civilization is the yeti-syny, evil offspring of humans and, basically, Bigfoot. Though not comics, fans will find much of interest in Behold!!! The Protong—it’s as if Jack Kirby actually believed the Inhumans were real. This primo example of lovely lunacy can be found at Central. BEHOLD!!!

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